

REMARKS

The present amendment is in response to the final Official Action dated June 15, 2004. Claims 1-12, 19 and 20 were pending upon issuance of the Official Action. Applicants have previously canceled Claims 13-18 following a restriction requirement, although Applicants reserve the right to pursue these claims in one or more future related applications. The Official Action indicated that dependent Claims 3 and 10 were allowable. As such, independent Claim 1 has been amended to include the recitation of allowable dependent Claim 3, and independent Claim 7 has similarly been amended to include the recitation of allowable dependent Claim 10. Since independent Claims 1 and 7 include the recitations of allowable dependent Claims 3 and 10, respectively, Applicants submit that independent Claims 1 and 10, as well as the claims that depend therefrom, are in condition for immediate allowance. As a result of the amendments to independent Claims 1 and 7, dependent Claims 3 and 10 have now been canceled.

Independent Claims 19 and 20 have also been amended to include the same recitation that was found to be allowable as previously set forth by dependent Claims 3 and 10, namely, the recitation that the coating has a thickness of about 0.003-0.007 inch. As such, Applicants submit that amended independent Claims 19 and 20 are similarly in condition for immediate allowance.

The amendments to the independent claims do not raise any new issues and, therefore, should be considered at this stage of prosecution. In particular, all of the independent claims were merely amended to include a recitation previously recited by dependent Claims 3 and 10 and previously found to be allowable. As such, its incorporation into the independent claims does not raise new issues.

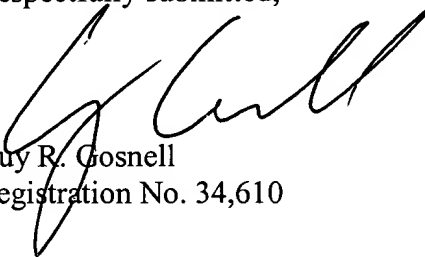
Consideration Of Previously Submitted Information Disclosure Statement

It is noted a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement was filed on August 24, 2004 to make of record several references cited by a Search Report issued in the corresponding European application. Accordingly, it is requested that an initialed copy of the Form 1449 that accompanied the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement be forwarded to the undersigned with the next communication from the PTO. In order to facilitate review of the references by the Examiner, a copy of the Information Disclosure Statement and the Form 1449 are attached hereto. Copies of the cited references were provided at the time of filing the original Information Disclosure Statement, and, therefore, no additional copies of the references are submitted herewith. Applicants will be pleased to provide additional copies of the references upon the Examiner's request if it proves difficult to locate the original references.

Conclusion

In view of the amended claims and the remarks presented above, it is respectfully submitted that all of the present claims of the present application are in condition for immediate allowance. It is therefore respectfully requested that a Notice of Allowance be issued. The Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to resolve any remaining issues in order to expedite examination of the present application. It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,

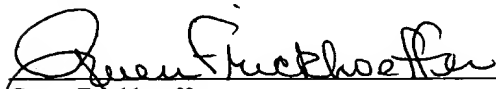


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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on September 15, 2004.



Gwen Frickhoeffter
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